

Human Services Committee
January 25, 2018, 8 AM

Attendance

Beth Kerrigan, Chair
Ben Wenograd
Mary Fay (via telephone)
Shari Cantor, Mayor

Staff

Matt Hart, Town Manager
Helen Rubino-Turco, Social & Leisure Services Director
Martha Church, Library Services Director

Guest

Barry Walters, Co-chair, West Hartford Human Rights Commission

1. **Call to Order:** Chairperson Beth Kerrigan called the meeting to order at 8:00 AM
2. **Communications:** Minutes from the November 30, 2017 Human Services meeting were acknowledged.
3. **Social and Leisure Services Updates:**
Helen Rubino-Turco announced that a candidate has been hired to fill the vacant Senior Staff Assistant position in Social Services. Victoria Branning will assume the position in early February.

Helen updated the Committee on the exploration of a possible ordinance change to allow advertising signage in public parks, a request that has been made by several youth leagues and is supported by the All Sports Council. Youth leagues have been asked to contribute more and more to upgrades to the facilities they use, and sponsorships that include signage in parks is one revenue source that has been unavailable to them. Leisure Services staff researched the signage practices in neighboring towns and developed a list of possible restrictions to consider. Leisure Services is working with the Town Planners office and the Zoning Official to draft ordinance language for consideration.

Leisure Services recently conducted a survey of residents on West Hartford's four outdoor pools. The most frequent comments requested extended public swim hours and the continued opportunity for lap swimming. Based on the results, Leisure Services will introduce programming changes at the outdoor pools this summer. All pools will be open to the public no later than Noon each weekday, rather than 1 PM. One pool will be open for recreational swim at 11 AM weekdays (at Kennedy for the first 4 weeks of pool season, and at Eisenhower for the second 4 weeks of the pool season). The swim teams will be moved to Cornerstone Aquatics Center for weekday practices but will still hold weekend meets at the outdoor pools. This change will allow for all pools to be open to the public throughout the day, instead of closing between 4:30 PM and 6:00 PM as they did in past summers. Dedicated lap swims will be scheduled, along with two lap lanes at various other times during the day. Swim lessons will

continue at all pools at various times throughout the pool season. New schedules with the extended hours will be included in the upcoming Spring/Summer Program Guide.

In 2014, West Hartford was designated a Bronze level Bicycle Friendly Community by the League of American Bicyclists. Leisure Services will take the lead again to renew the application, with the goal of achieving the Silver level. Helen is gathering input from different Town departments and the Board of Education and will submit the application in mid-February.

4. **Library Services Updates:** Library Services Director Martha Church updated Committee members on public service hours changes at the libraries. Effective January 1, the Noah Webster Library Children's Room closes at 8 pm Monday through Thursday evenings. This is typically a low or no use period by members of the public. Part-time staff is now released at 8pm. The Library meeting room and the Adult and Teen areas continue to remain open until 9pm.

Martha also reported that the Library is the recipient of three grants for specific library projects. The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving is funding a Summer Fundays program for school-age children in the Faxon neighborhood. The grant will provide a stipend for a professional librarian to work with teen volunteers in a modified day-camp setting at the library focusing on maintaining or boosting literacy skills during the summer months.

A second HFPG grant will fund an adult lecture and discussion series, One World. Faculty from area colleges and universities will be invited to present lectures on topics of global significance. In addition, a weekly discussion group will meet at the library to discuss articles in *The Economist* magazine.

The third grant is from the Institute of Museum and Library Services and funds a two-year project training library staff in the collection and preservation of digital materials such as webpages to create a historical archive of community information.

Finally, Martha reported on a new service to properly and cost-effectively manage library materials withdrawn from library collections as part of regular collection maintenance. Library staff hope to place a collection receptacle at the Faxon Library to be serviced on a regular basis by Big Hearted Books which will pay .03 per pound for these items and reuse or recycle them.

5. **Compassionate City Discussion (Human Rights Commission):** Members of the Human Service Committee and the Human Rights Commission received a packet of materials describing community initiatives and community response in several communities that have affirmed the Charter for Compassion and passed resolutions to become "Compassionate Communities." Barry Walters, co-chair of the West Hartford Human Rights Commission represented the Commission. After an examination of the materials and discussion of how West Hartford might create a meaningful local program, members of the Committee endorsed the Human Rights Commission request to bring a resolution to the West Hartford Town Council to affirm the Charter for Compassion and designate the Town of West Hartford as a Compassionate City.
6. **Adjournment:** Chairperson Kerrigan adjourned the meeting at 9:00 AM.